

Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel claims 80-86.

Listing of Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

72. (Previously Presented) A database searching apparatus comprising:
a search engine operative to provide search results including search listings
according to rank; and
a database searchable by the search engine and including a plurality of search
listings, at least some search listings being associated with advertisers, an
advertiser-associated search listing including
a search term specified by the advertiser, and
a desired rank specified by the advertiser for a the search listing and a
maximum cost per click (maximum CPC) and a cost per click (CPC)
associated with the desired rank for the search term and the
advertiser,
the search engine being operative, when the advertiser enters a new search
listing or changes the maximum CPC of a search listing,
to adjust the CPC of the advertiser's search listing to maintain the desired
rank,
to move the search listing to the highest rank possible without exceeding
the maximum CPC of the advertiser's search listing,
to maintain the CPC of the advertiser's search listing less than or equal to
the maximum CPC of the advertiser's search listing,
to set the CPC of the advertiser's search listing no higher than necessary,
and
to avoid setting the CPC of the advertiser's search listing so that desired
ranks and CPCs of other advertisers are maintained.

73. (Previously Presented) The database searching apparatus of claim 72 wherein the database further stores a timestamp associated with each desired rank, the timestamp indicated time the search listing was entered or changed.

74. (Previously Presented) The database searching apparatus of claim 73 wherein the search engine is configured to
receive a search request,
locate one or more search listings having a matching relationship with the search request; and
order search results from the one or more search listings using the CPC associated with the one or more search listings.

75. (Previously Presented) The database searching apparatus of claim 72 further comprising:
an account manager accessible by the advertiser to vary at least one of the maximum cost per click and the desired rank for a respective bid/desired rank.

76. (Previously Presented) The database searching apparatus of claim 75 wherein the account manager is further accessible by the advertiser to vary the maximum cost per click for two or more possible ranks specified by the advertiser.

77. (Previously Presented) The database searching apparatus of claim 72 further comprising:
one or more software agents configured to
receive advertiser bid information, and
act on the advertiser bid information to adjust the cost per click for a specified search listing.

78. (Previously Presented) The database searching apparatus of claim 77 wherein the one or more software agents is configured to
increase current cost per click of the specified search listing if the rank of the
specified search listing can be improved without exceeding the maximum
cost per click; and
decrease the current cost per click of the specified search listing without moving
the specified search listing to a rank worse than the desired rank.

79. (Previously Presented) The database searching apparatus of claim 78 wherein the one or more software agents is configured to decrease the current cost per click of the specified search listing only if no other search listing will have its respective current cost per click increased to decrease the rank of the specified search listing.